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By J.D. Sumner
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The U.S. House voted to extend Bush-era tax cuts Thursday.

WASHINGTON, D.C - U.S. Rep. Sanford Bishop, D-Albany, says that while the tax cuts that were extended by the U.S. House Thursday were vital to the middle class, more is needed to protect farmers and small business as they struggle to recover from the recession.

In a statement issued to reporters, Bishop said that he voted for the extension on the Bush-era tax cuts, which were set to expire in January, but also said that the cuts should be expanded to make sure the nation's economic recovery isn't stymied.

"Unfortunately, this measure does not go far enough. Given the current state of our fragile economic recovery, now is not the time to raise taxes on any American. Businesses large and small are still having difficulty creating new jobs, training their workers, and growing for the future. I remain deeply concerned that raising taxes on those businesses would further impede job creation and punish success at a time when we should be encouraging the entrepreneurial spirit," the statement reads.

"Furthermore, I am troubled that this measure does not address estate tax relief. The most oppressive estate tax we have seen in a decade is scheduled to go into effect at the beginning

of the New Year. Our farmers and small business owners face dire consequences from inaction on this issue."

Pointing to a June 2009 report by the U.S. Department of Agriculture that said that if Congress failed to act on estate tax relief by the end of the year 10 percent of farms across America would be impacted 98 percent being small family-owned farms , Bishop said that many Georgians would face the loss of family-owned farms and devastating economic consequences.

"We cannot ignore these issues, and it is my hope that a bipartisan agreement can be reached before the New Year. We must extend the 2001 and 2003 tax cuts, at least temporarily, for all Americans, as well as provide substantial estate tax relief for the benefit of our family-owned farms and businesses," the statement reads. "Now is not the time for political games and maneuvering. The nation needs us to come together and address this issue in a bipartisan manner. We truly cannot afford to wait any longer."

The House voted 234-188 to extend the tax cuts signed by former President George W. Bush that are due to expire Jan. 1 for individuals making less than \$200,000 and families making less than \$250,000.

The bill passed the House over the objections of many Republicans who believe that the bill, which cuts taxes on all but the top 2 percent of the wealthiest Americans, penalizes some for their success.